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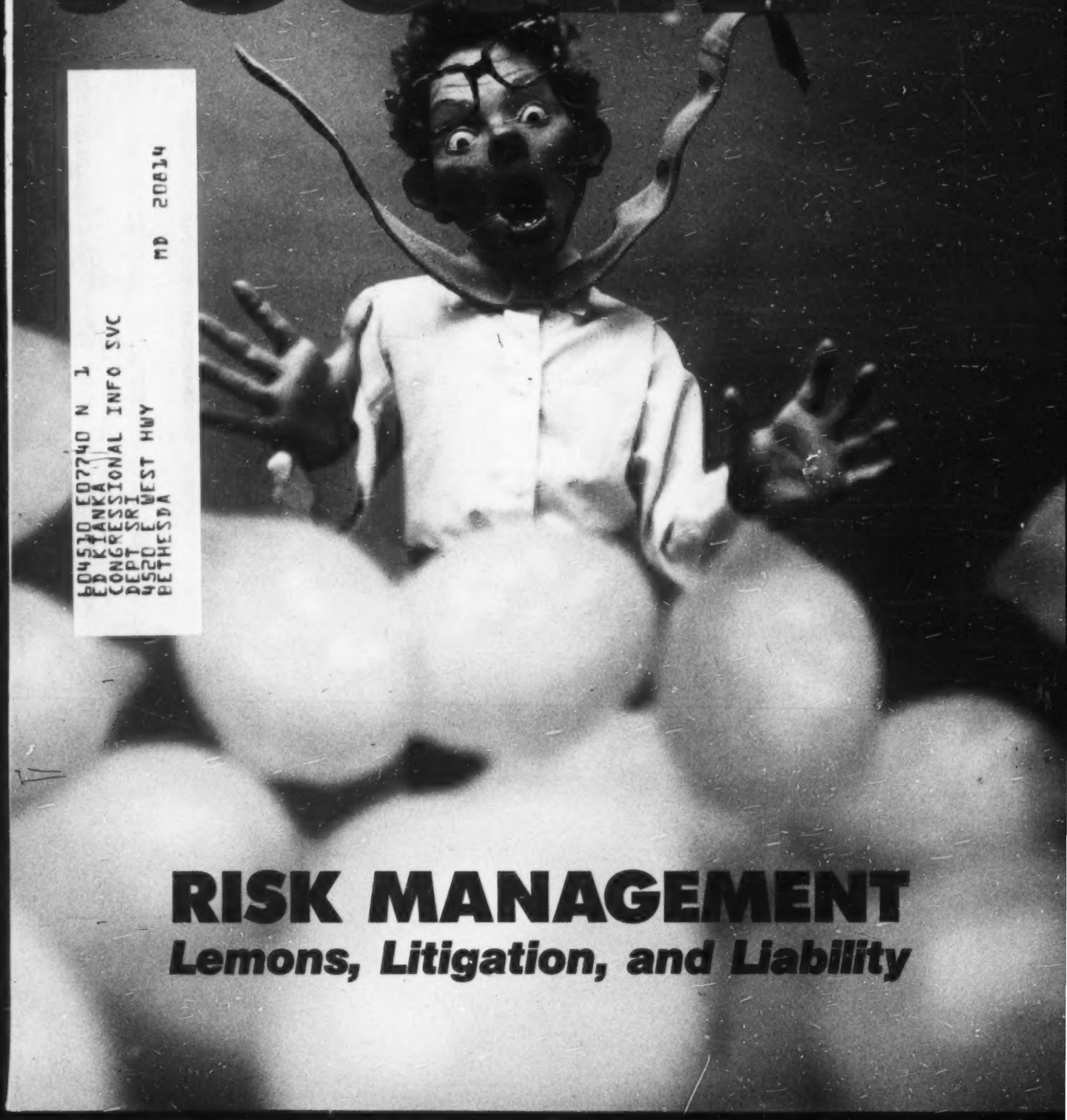

RISK MANAGEMENT

Lemons, Litigation, and Liability

PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

June 1986 Vol. 42 No. 6

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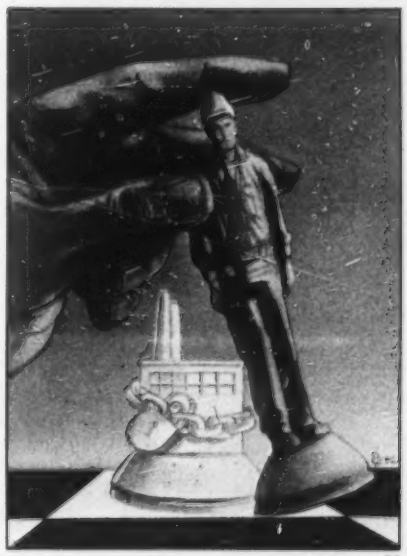

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Cover sculpture and photograph by Bruce Strachan

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SALARY SURVEY

by Christopher Beyer

Editor's note: *The survey from which the following results were drawn was conducted as an insert poll in the January 1986 issue of* PRJ. *Respondents were self-selected readers who chose to fill in the Questionnaire and mail it back. The results are not necessarily representative of the universe of public relations professionals but offer insights into trends in the field and, in many cases, correlate well with data drawn from other formal studies.*

MEN earned median salaries that were $11,000, or 39 percent, more on average than women in public relations in 1985, but median income for women rose 11.2 percent over the previous year (compared to 8.8 percent for men), reducing the gap by three percentage points. This and other results of the *PRJ Questionnaire* on salaries indicate that there are promising signs that the salary gap between the sexes is narrowing.

Other results from the *PRJ* poll correlate with this difference in overall median income. Women were concentrated in the lower age groups (median age 34 compared to 39 for men). Women had fewer median years of experience in the field (7.5 compared to 12). Women had spent fewer median years in their current positions (2.5 compared to 3.8). And women were more heavily represented in areas of public relations that generally pay less: women were more represented in community relations and men in corporate communications, investor relations, and public affairs; women were more likely to work for health-care organizations and men for industrial and manufacturing concerns as well as utilities.

The 473 respondents to the *PRJ Questionnaire* were 56 percent female, came from every region of the U.S. and much of Canada—but most heavily from the Midwest, the Northeast, and the South—and represented most areas of specialization, with media relations, publicity, corporate communications, and community relations most prominent.

The findings regarding gender-based salary differentials are similar to those reported by *pr reporter* late last year. For all age groups except those 25 to 29 years old, *pr reporter* found that men earned more, with the greatest differential in the 50-to-59 age group, where men had a median salary $25,000 higher than women. "The good news for young women is that salary discrimination has on the whole eased—the evidence lies in the higher salary for women in the 25-29 age group," *pr reporter* wrote. Women in this group received a median salary $2,300 higher than men in 1985.

However, while the picture looks good for younger women in the field, *pr reporter* found that comparable experience did not necessarily translate into comparable pay. Women respondents reported lower salaries at almost all experience levels than did men. This was especially evident among older women: those with 20 to 29 years of experience earned a median salary $19,000 less than their male counterparts.

All these figures seem to correlate with the increased number of women entering public relations. According to a recent study by the United States Labor Department, this is a trend now common to *all* professions: women now hold the majority of professional jobs in the United States. While men still tend to have the higher level positions, the representation of women is significant and growing at middle and lower levels as well as in professional graduate and undergraduate programs.

Also evident in the *PRJ Questionnaire* results were regional distinctions that

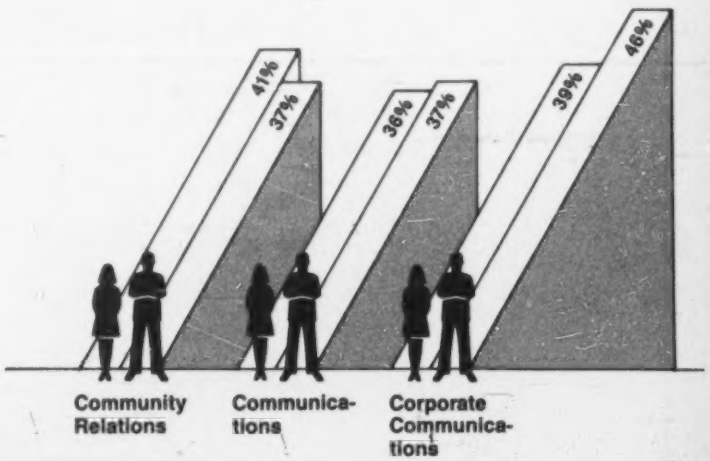


TABLE 1:
Percentages of Male and Female Respondents to *PRJ* Questionnaire in Salary Categories

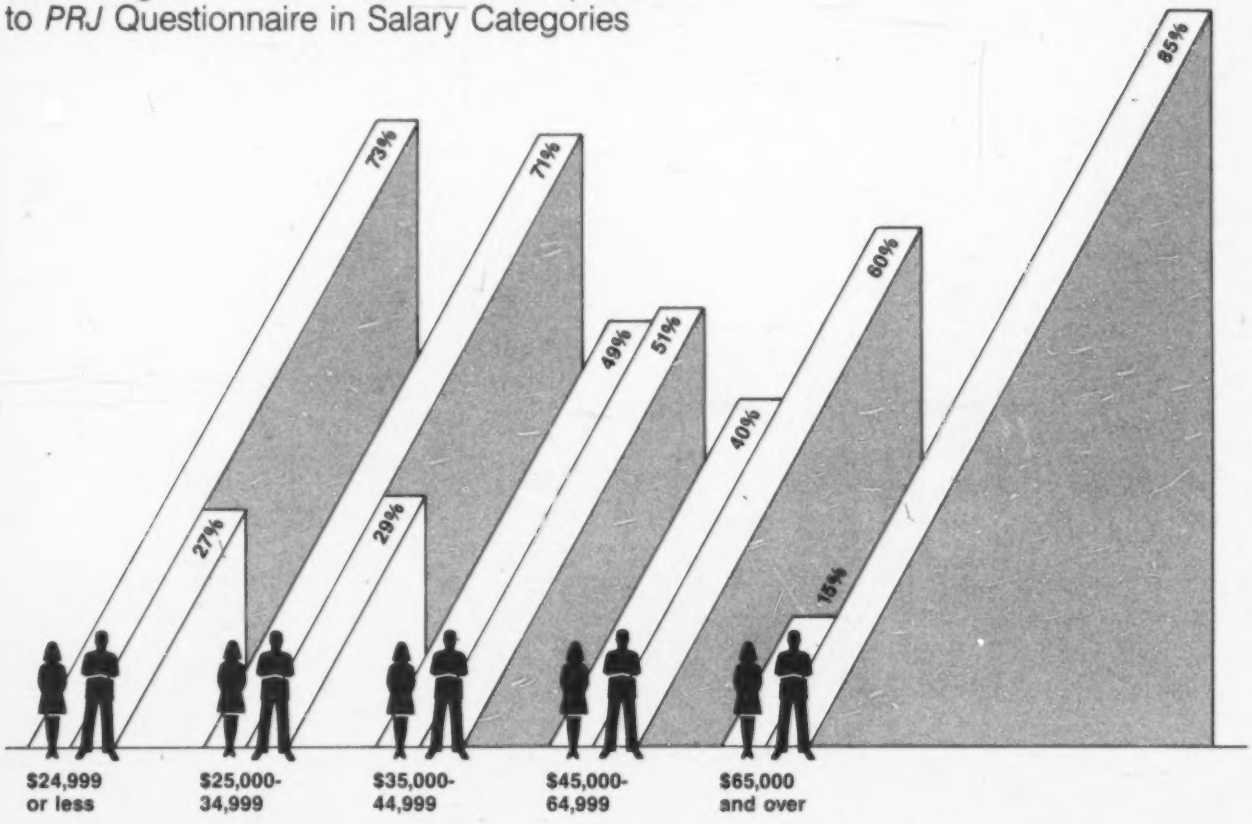


Table 1: *Women, who represented 56 percent of the Questionnaire respondents, were clustered in the lower salary ranges. They were also younger and more often employed in lower paying industries and areas of specialization.*
Table 2: *Respondents were asked to specify areas of public relations in which they work; multiple selections were allowed. Men and women were equally represented in most areas of specialization except community relations and marketing, where women were more numerous, and corporate communications, investor relations, and public affairs, where men were more numerous.*

TABLE 2:
Percentages of Male and Female *PRJ* Questionnaire Respondents in Different Areas of Public Relations

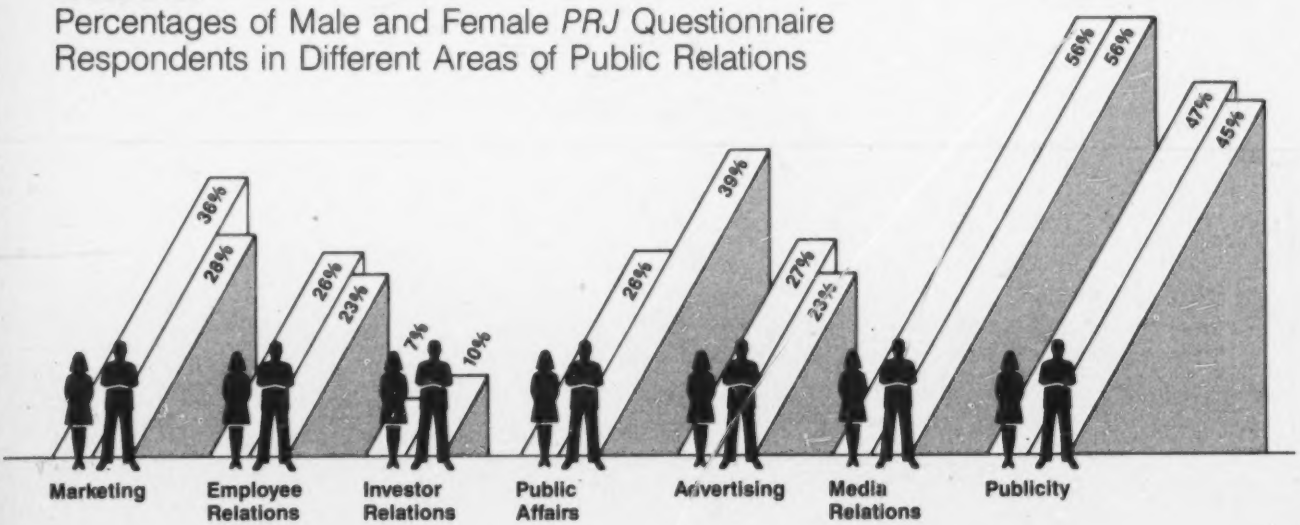
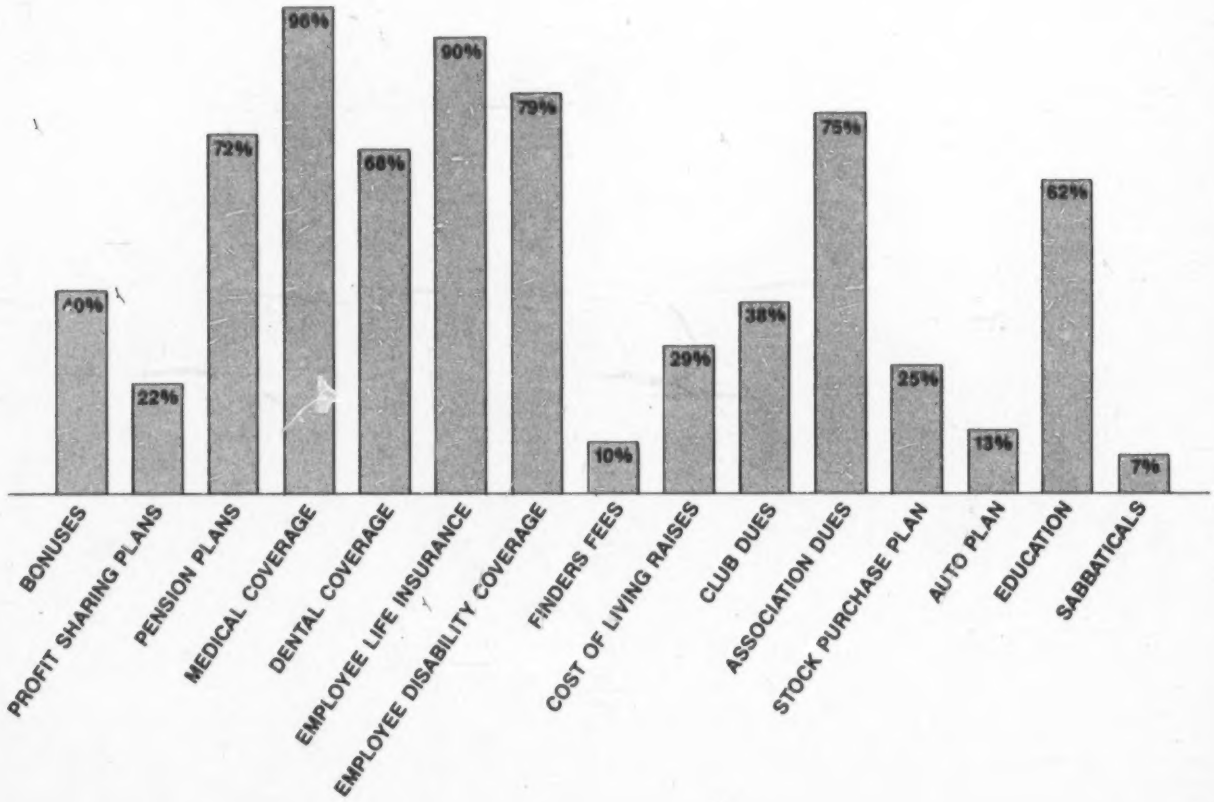


TABLE 3:
Employment Benefits Given to Respondents to *PRJ* Questionnaire

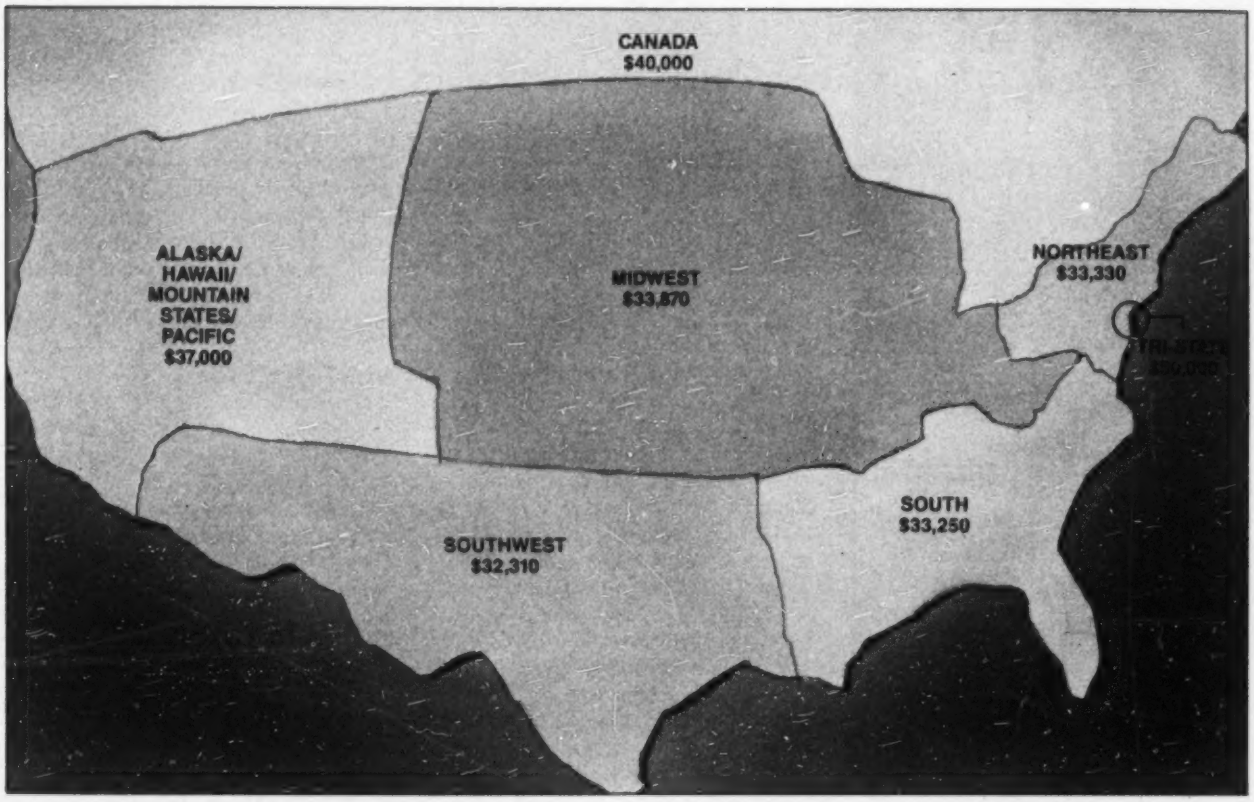


BALANCE SHEET

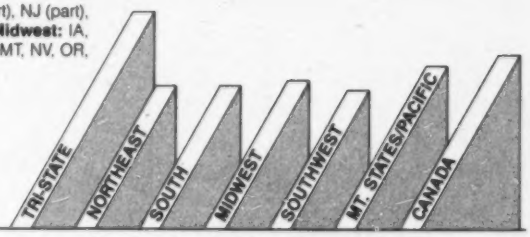
Other data emerging from the *PRJ* Questionnaire on salaries reveal that among respondents:

- 61 percent work for firms or departments with fewer than four public relations professionals.
- 45 percent have done graduate work.
- 63 percent of those Accredited have done graduate work.
- 41 percent of counselors are officers or partners.
- 44 percent of those not working for counseling firms are directors.
- The median salary of Accredited practitioners is 33 percent higher than those not Accredited.
- The median age of Accredited practitioners is 44; the median age of non-Accredited practitioners is 35.
- 38 percent of counselors have been in their present positions for one year or less.
- 32 percent of all other respondents have been in their present positions for five years or more.
- 7 percent have been in their present jobs for 10 years or more.
- 19 percent of those in the tri-state New York metropolitan area have been in their present jobs for 10 years or more.
- The median number of years in public relations for all respondents is 8.9.
- The median number of years in public relations for Accredited respondents is 15.6.

TABLE 4:
Median 1985 Salaries of Respondents to *PRJ* Questionnaire by Geographic Regions[1]



[1]Please note that all regions indicated on returned Questionnaires were checked against return addresses to make sure respondents were from states categorized as follows: **Northeast:** CT (part), DE, DC, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ (part), NY (part), PA, RI, VT. **Tri-State:** CT (part), NJ (part), NY (part). **South:** AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA. **Southwest:** AZ, NM, OK, TX. **Midwest:** IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI, WV. **Mountain States/Pacific:** AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY. **Canada:** All provinces.



Map by Howard Perlin

showed the Southwest (TX, NM, AZ, and OK) emerging as an area with rising incomes, substantial perquisites, and professionals working in emerging and higher-paid areas of the field. Respondents from the tri-state New York metropolitan area (northern New Jersey, southern Connecticut, New York City, and the four New York State counties bordering it) reported higher median incomes ($50,000 compared to a national median of $34,880), more experience (14.4 years compared to 8.9 for respondents in general), longer tenure in current positions (4.4 years compared to 3), and larger public relations firms or departments (48 percent of tri-state respondents work in firms or departments with 10 or more public relations professionals compared to 14 percent nationwide). However, more respondents from both the New York region and the Southwest reported bonuses and profit-sharing plans and more respondents in both New York and the Southwest reported investor relations and corporate communications as their areas of specialty.

Overall, the median salary of *PRJ*'s respondents rose from $31,900 in 1984 to $34,880 in 1985, an increase of 9.3 percent. For all workers in the United States, the Conference Board reported a 6.4 percent rise in salaries in 1985.

Over 90 percent of respondents received medical coverage and life insurance, while most had pension plans, dental, and disability coverage. Most also received payments for association dues and education, but these increased dramatically with salary. Also more higher-paid practitioners received finders' fees, bonuses, profit sharing, and stock-purchase plans. Cost of living increases were given mainly to those with lower salaries, and sabbaticals were concentrated at the mid-level salary range. ■

Christopher Beyer is an editorial intern at PRJ.